

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 OES-03 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2529

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STATE FOR EUR/SOV; USIA FOR IEU

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PFOR UR

SUBJ: NBC-TV TECHNICIAN QUIZZED BY SOVIETS

1. THERE WAS AN ATMOSPHERE OF JUBILATION AT THE ASTP
PRESS CENTER IN MOSCOW FOLLOWING THE TOUCH-DOWN OF THE
SOYUZ THE AFTERNOON OF JULY 21. US CORRESPONDENTS, EMBASSY
AND NASA OFFICIALS WERE REPEATEDLY GREETED, AND SEVERAL
WERE INTERVIEWED BY SOVIET JOURNALISTS FOR THEIR REACTIONS.
IN THE MIDST OF THIS EUPHORIA, A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
STATE COMMITTEE ON TV AND RADIO APPROACHED ONE OF THE
NBC-TV TECHNICIANS (A GERMAN) WITH AN INTERPRETER AND
PERSISTENTLY GRILLED HIM ON WHAT NBC HAD BEEN FILMING
IN MOSCOW ASIDE FROM THE SOYUZ-APOLLO EVENTS. WHEN THE
TECHNICIAN RESPONDED THAT THEY WERE THERE ONLY FOR THE
ASTP, THE SOVIET OFFICIAL ASKED IF THEY HAD NOT FILMED
CROWDS IN GUM (DEPARTMENT STORE); TOLD NO, HE ASKED IF NBC
HAD NOT FILMED IN RED SQUARE; AGAIN TOLD NO, HE
DEMANDED TO KNOW EXACTLY WHAT NBC HAD FILMED THAT
DAY; IN ADDITION, HE WANTED TO KNOW WHAT MEMBERS
OF THE NBC TEAM WERE DOING WHEN THEY WERE NOT FILM-
ING. THE TECHNICIAN SAID HE RESPONDED POLITELY AND
DIRECTLY TO THE QUESTIONS, BUT ADDED THAT HE WAS TAKEN
ABACK AFTER OVER A WEEK OF UNEXCELLED COOPERATION

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FROM THE SOVIETS.

2. COMMENT: JUST A DAY EARLIER, THE NBC TEAM HAD EMPHASIZED THAT NEVER IN THEIR NUMEROUS TRIPS TO THE USSR HAD THE SOVIETS PROVIDED SUCH WILLING AND PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE. EVEN DURING THE US PRESIDENTIAL VISITS, THEY HAD ENCOUNTERED SOME CHARACTERISTIC HOSTILITY AND BALKINESS. THE REPORTED INCIDENT IS THE FIRST EXAMPLE OF PRESS HARASSMENT TO COME TO THE EMBASSY'S ATTENTION DURING THE ASTP EVENTS. UNFORTUNATELY, NBC MAN DID NOT CATCH THE NAME OF THE SOVIET OFFICIAL, BUT UNLESS THE DEPARTMENT OBJECTS, EMBASSY STILL PLANS TO VERBALLY AND IN LOW-KEY MANNER POINT OUT COUNTERPRODUCTIVE NATURE OF SUCH ACTIONS TO MIDDLE-LEVEL CONTACT AT STATE COMMITTEE ON TV AND RADIO.

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